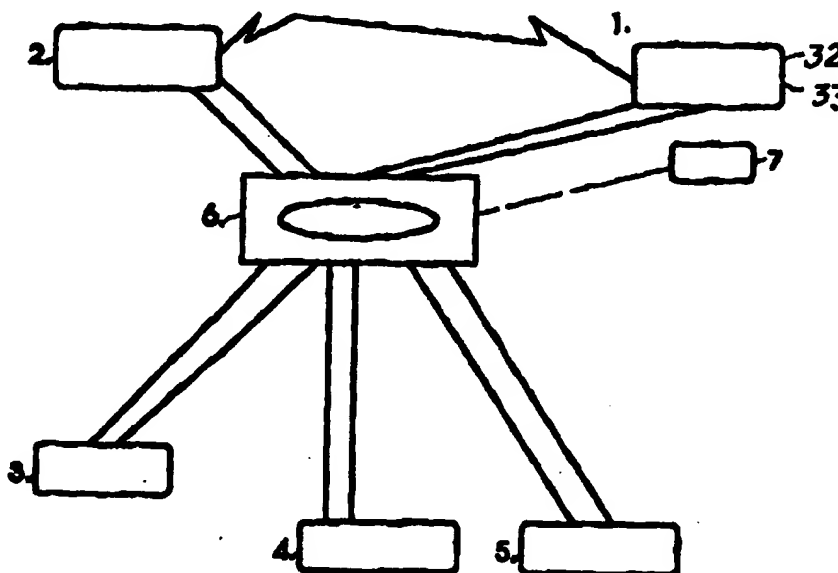




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(54) Title: A METHOD AND A MEANS FOR PERFORMING A SERVICE VIA AN INTERACTIVE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK		
(57) Abstract <p>A method and a central unit adapted for carrying out an interactive playing procedure according to which players (1), who at least have a key telephone instrument (33) at their disposal, may participate on an obligating basis in a gambling procedure, such as a play for money, by a telecommunication network adapted to interchange data between each player (1), at least one public bookmaker (4, 5) at least one bank (3), and a specific central unit or gambling station (6). The player (1) transmits his bank account number and his authorisation/identification (PIN) code to the gambling station (6). The gambling station (6) establishes connections to the bank(s) (3), the bookmaker(s) (4, 5); transmits a clearance signal to the player (1) once the authorisation/identification code has been accepted and if the bank account has sufficient coverage, as well as instructions to the player (1) about how to handle his telecommunication equipment (32, 33) to select the desired gambling combinations and possibly correcting same. The gambling station (6) also executes the necessary procedures and takes care of receipts for the played combination and forwards same to the player (1).</p>		



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A METHOD AND A MEANS FOR PERFORMING A SERVICE VIA AN INTER-
ACTIVE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK.

The present invention relates to a method for taking
part in a game via a telecommunication network.

5 The invention also relates to a new central unit adapted
to carry out the above method.

Interactive telecommunication systems in which the user
by means of a television set may participate in different
activities are earlier known. As an example of the prior art
10 it is referred to the US patent No. 5.404.393 from which a
method and an apparatus for accomplishing an interactive
television connection using menu-windows are earlier known.

However, methods or systems which allow prosecution of
a binding participation in a game, and in particular in a
15 game about money via interactive telecommunication systems
are not earlier known.

The object of the present invention is in first hand to
provide a method and a central unit which make it possible
for players to participate in a binding or obligating way in
20 games, and in particular to take part in gambling games in
which the player shall play for a specific amount or stake,
via a telecommunication network.

Further it may be said that an object of the present
invention is to provide a method and a system according to
25 which a binding participation in a game about money may be
fulfilled substantially by means of existing telecommuni-
cation links which are interconnected in a new central unit
or gambling station which also comprises connections to at
least one bank and at least one public bookmaker and where
30 the gambling station also ensures and takes care of the
authentication, both by checking the identity of the parti-
cipants and the bank account coverage and by producing and
taking care of receipts for games that are fulfilled.

To meet the above objects a central unit has been
35 developed in connection with this invention, which central
unit also is referred to as the gambling station, and this
gambling station is connected to a telecommunication network
via suitable interfaces, while the gambling station accom-
plishes the establishing of connections with calling players,
40 checks the players identification codes, checks the players

coverage in associated bank accounts, collects relevant information about the desired game, transmits game signals and game instructions to and from the players on an individual base, and produces and stores receipts for games that
5 are completed.

The gambling station according to the present invention is adapted to establish, partly one-way, partly two-way communications via a telecommunication network such as the public telephone network, direct transmission lines and
10 television links. The gambling station according to the present invention is also provided with suitable interfaces to establish two-way connections with banks and public bookmakers such as national lotteries, public gambling authorities etc. (in Norway e.g. Norsk Rikstoto, Norsk
15 Tipping etc.).

The gambling station according to the present invention is construed to function as one among several commission agents for different games about money being practical at any time period.

20 To give a more clear understanding of the invention it is referred to the detailed description of some embodiments given below, and to the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 illustrates the structure of a telecommunication network which makes it possible to participate in
25 games about money, directly via a telecommunication network, and

Fig. 2 illustrates in more detail the functional units which may be included in a gambling station 6, which is the main part of Fig. 2.

30 It is emphasized that the reference numbers used in both figures are identical when applicable. Similarly it should be pointed out that the shown embodiments are not meant to be limiting examples of the present invention which may be implemented in many different ways not explicitly
35 shown in the embodiments. Finally it should be mentioned that earlier developed details and prior art technique assumed known within this art and relating to interactive telecommunication systems, are not shown in the figures to avoid unnecessary complex examples. Thus, a lot of details
40 and techniques earlier known in connection with interactive telecommunication systems may also be included in the system

without extending the scope of the present invention.

In Fig. 1 it is shown that the equipment which may be present at any player 1 may comprise a telephone instrument, a television set having teletext facilities, and possibly a personal computer 7. It should already be pointed out that in the simplest embodiment of the invention the player only has a key telephone set which will be sufficient to make use of the invention. In Fig. 1 a television station 2 is also shown. Although the figure assumes that the signal transmission is accomplished as a wireless transmission, this is not a limitation as the connection from the television transmitter to the television receiver also may be a cable connection. The bank 3 on the figure may be an existing public bank or one specific game bank established for the players and in which all the accounts are game accounts established for people taking part in this type of interactive gambling. The bank 3 then possibly may be a bank in which each single player has made an advance deposit for which he want to play, and where each player has been associated to a member or account number or any other type of registration number which may be linked to his account number. On the figure it is also shown two "public bookmaker companies", as in this example a national Football pools company 4 (in Norway: Norsk Tipping) and a public Totalisator board 5 (in Norway: Norsk Rikstoto).

When the system units shown in Figure 1 are considered, the following details may also be mentioned:

1. The caller/player

The player need to have a telephone apparatus and possibly also a television set, preferably with facilities for teletext. The player establishes an account in a bank. This account may freely be used by the account-holder by means of a PIN-code transmitted to the direct game central (DC). The player may also use a personal computer such as PC 7, but this feature is not absolutely required.

2. Television station

One or more television stations having interactive teletext facilities.

3. Bank

One (or more) bank(s) in which the player deposite a game account.

4. Football pools (in Norway: Norsk Tipping)

With a system according to the present invention the player may interactively take part in the different games for money in the Norwegian football pools, which includes several

- 5 money games, such as totalisator games, betting and lotteries (in Norway: Lotto, Vikinglotto, Fotballtipping, Oddsen etc.).

5. Norwegian horse races

With this system the player may interactively take part in
10 all money games under Norwegian horse racing (Norsk Rikstoto), which includes many different games (V75, V5, Dagens Dobbel, Vinner, Trippel etc.).

6. D.S. (Direct play central).

- The D.S.-company is meant to be the "interactive representative (commission agent)". In this company one will find
15 central unit which "treats" the sound signals and possibly also the teletext pictures which the player needs for his playing operation. The central unit (DS) makes contact with all the system units (from 1-5 on Fig. 1) and checks that
20 everything is handled correctly. The D.S. unit registers and copies all the transactions and also the sounds/pictures/-coupons.

- All the units are connected to the gambling central 6, also referred to as the direct play central (DC) or central
25 unit, via the telecommunication lines which preferably are directly established digital lines with an established connection preferably via suitable coaxial cables or glass fibre cables giving a high security against tapping and disturbances interfering with the transactions or the games.
30 These connections or links are assumed on the figure, however, without any specific reference numbers. On the figure it is only referred to one single player and he has been provided with a telephone, a television set including teletext facilities and also a personal computer. It should,
35 however, be emphasized that a large number of players may be handled simultaneously and the players may be connected to the central unit in different manners and may also have different types of sophisticated equipment accessible. A minimum requirement is that each player must have possibility
40 for telephone contact with the DC central unit and accordingly he must have a telephone instrument or a mobile

telephone. However, both a TV-set and a personal computer are options which not necessarily has to be met.

The players usage of the system is shown in the below example describing the procedure.

- 5 1. The player makes a call to the central unit or telephone number (usual tax or additional tax).
2. The player is asked, from the gambling central 6, to give his bank account number and thereafter he is asked to give his 4-numbers PIN-code. If the account number or the
10 PIN-code is erroneous, the player has two new possibilities. If all three repetitions are wrongly dialed the bank is informed from DC central unit and the account is closed until the account-holder takes personal contact. If, however, the number is correctly dialed, a new teletext page
15 informing about the saldo and other details is presented to the player.
3. If teletext is desired and accessible, the DC central unit search (through a specific system not shown) after an accessible television channel, and on this channel a search
20 is made after an unoccupied teletext page. If no teletext pages are accessible, the game may be fulfilled via the sound channel only.
4. By using the teletext-system the player is informed via his unique teletext page having a DS-logo, and a page including a main menu which (in its first version) comprises
25 the following text: Press 1 for game 1 (Lotto), press 2 for football pools, press 3 for numbers game (Oddsen) or press 4 for horse racing, and 5 for information. The player then selects a game as desired, e.g. a numbers game (Lotto).
- 30 The DS central unit gives the player the relevant pieces of information related to the selected game.
5. The player is asked to complete his coupon (or forcast) via the phone. All keys depressed are shown on his specific teletext screen and at the same time the values may be heard
35 via the phone. If a key is pressed erroneously corrections are made e.g. by depressing one specific key as the *-key.
6. Once the coupon is finished, the transaction is completed by depressing one specific key, such as the #-key. Thereafter the completed coupon is shown on the teletext
40 screen (if viable) and is also repeated via the phone connection. The DS central unit checks that the account has

sufficient coverage and that the coupon is accepted. If everything is OK the player may accept the game by e.g. depressing the *-key once more, whereupon the coupon is registered and gets a unique identification number which
5 also is the receipt number for the player. The coupon with this ID-number is copied and transmitted to the correct address, which e.g. may be the player, a public gambling company, a bank, an internal separate system or other receivers. The bank at once debits the amount at stake from
10 the player's account, and the bank also performs the transmittal of the coupon with the receipt number. The player can read his receipt number on his teletext screen and is asked whether he want to go on with other games or make more coupons. If the player want to end the transaction the
15 transiever is simply hooked. If the player want to continue the main menu is repeated e.g. as the player depress his #-key, but if he shall only play a new coupon in the same game he may wait without making any new key pressures. The coupon, the transaction and the receipt number are registered
20 and stored e.g. at the DC central unit, a public bookmaker and/or the bank. The coupon and the receipt number may be stored by a gambling firm which e.g. may be a national lottery or a bookmaker (in Norway: Norsk Tipping or Norsk Rikstoto). The same procedure may be followed without any
25 teletext use, only with sound facility. This may in particular be the case if the player stays at a location without television (in car, abroad etc.), without teletext accessible or in situations where all the teletext pages are occupied.

30 In Fig. 2 a more complete structure of the functional blocks which are to be included in the gambling central 6 from Fig. 1, is shown.

First of all it should be noted that the players 1, of whom only one having the reference number 1, is shown on
35 Fig. 2, may be provided with different units on their individual locations. Thus, the player 1 on Fig. 2 has been shown with a television set 32, a telephone instrument 38 as well as a personal computer 7, while other players may be provided only with a telephone instrument 33 and a television set 32, while still other players may be provided
40 with a telephone 33 only, and this telephone may be a usual

key phone or a mobile telephone set. With the present technique it is implicitly understood that the complete telecommunication function may be implemented within a personal computer, such as PC 7 on the figure.

5 On top of Fig. 2 the remaining parts of the external network are shown with the same reference numbers as used on Fig. 1, and these parts therefore will not be explained in any detail here. It should, however, briefly be mentioned that the direct game central or gambling station 6 is con-
10 nected to one or more television stations 2, one or more banks 3 and one or more public bookmakers 4,5, e.g. via the public telecommunication network. Below the function blocks comprised in the direct game central 6 will be explained in more detail.

15 The most important units within the gambling station 6 are the audio unit 10, the communication exchange 11, the bank unit 12 and the game unit 13. These units or circuitry implementing their functions have to be present if the gambling station 6 shall work as assumed. The communication
20 exchange 11 receives, evaluates, converts, and formats and finally transmits all signals used by the gambling station 6, both when internal communication and external communication are considered.

A short presentation of the remaining function blocks
25 included in the gambling station 6 will be given before the function is explained. The audio unit 10 is connected to a function block 14 which is activated when audio signals are to be used together with a teletext transmission. This block may be referred to as audio with teletext (TTV). The audio
30 unit 10 is in addition connected to a separate audio unit which only is activated when a phone is used alone. This functional block is referred to as 16 and is denoted as audio for telephone.

Below the communication center 11 it is arranged a
35 teletext unit 16, an identification unit 17, a member database 18, a teletext station selector 19, as well as a teletext page-selector 20. In addition there is a personal computer/Internet unit 31 adapted to receive/transmit information from/to the personal computer 7 at the players
40 location. This last mentioned communication may take place via an analog or digital line, such as ISDN. The function of

these blocks will be described in more detail below.

The communication center 11 is also connected to the bank unit 12 and the game unit 13, but the two last mentioned units are also, according to a preferred embodiment associated with several sub-functions. Below the bank unit 12 a security box 21 is arranged, in particular adapted for checking of PIN-codes and a receipt unit 22 to register and store receipts associated with finished games.

Below the game unit 13 there are, in the shown embodiment which however only represents an example of implementation of the invention, three units 23, 24, 25 adapted for collecting of information related to horse racing, football pools and numbers games (Lotto). In addition there are still further units such as the system game unit 26, the odds calculating unit 27, an advising unit 28 and the unit for additional game information 29.

Finally there is provided a further security unit 30 implemented as an insulated security store 30, in particular adapted to function as a back-up store of receipts. This security unit 30 may be incorporated in the game unit 6, but may also be located at a remote place due to security reasons.

The function of the system will be briefly explained below with reference to Fig. 2.

When a player 1 will contact the game system and accordingly also the gambling station 6, he uses his telephone 33 and dials the number to the gambling station. Then a speech connection is established via general telecommunication network of any time, to the audio unit 10 within the gambling station 6. The audio unit 10 reacts on the call by returning a question, e.g. by means of a digital speech generator, asking who the calling player is and also asks the player to state this by means of his keyboard. The user then may depress the keys corresponding to a number stating his identity, such as a bank account number, a member number or even his own phone number, whereupon the audio unit 10 via the communication exchange 11 checks all these details in its identification unit 17 and in the member database 18. In this connection a check may also be carried out to ensure that consistent or correlating numbers are received to enhance the security function. If the signal returning from

the communication unit 11 to the audio unit 10 represents an acceptance of the member identification, the communication exchange 11 at the same time will transmit information to the audio unit 10 whether the present subscriber 1 is associated to a teletext facility or not, and if this is the case, also via which television stations he is associated. If the subscriber 1 has a teletext facility, the page selector 20 will search for free teletext pages and a unique teletext page will be communicated to the player 1 and corresponding information is transmitted via the communication exchange 11 to the television stations 2 involved in the transmission to the present subscriber 1. The player 1 then receives a phone message from the audio unit 10 and is asked to select page x from the television station Y. The player 1 then will receive information via the audio unit 10, via the phone 33 and from the television station 2 on his unique teletext page on his television set 32.

Once this/these connection(s) is/are established, the audio unit 10 and/or the teletext page request(s) that the user gives his bank account number (or another identification number), which then are checked via the communication exchange 11 and the bank unit 12, whereupon the security is further increased as the user 1 is asked to give his personal identification or PIN-code which thereafter is checked by the PIN-code unit 21. The bank unit 12 also is connected to external banks 3 via the communication exchange 11. However, the situation may be that a separate bank account has been established within the very bank unit 12 meant only for use in connection with such games. With this implementation of the exchange it is ensured that the player may accomplish the game procedure from any accessible location having a key telephone and possibly other optional equipment, that is even if he is not present at his own home station.

If all conditions are accepted so far, the player is asked to select the games in which he want to participate, whereupon he is interconnected to the game unit 13 and its sub-units related to the different types of games included. The game unit 13, via the communication exchange 11, also is connected to the participating bookmaker companies 4,5 as mentioned above. The game unit 13 may now collect relevant and new details from the bookmaker 4,5 related to just the

game in which the user want to participate. All such details are not mentioned here, but if e.g. football pools are considered, several facts about the team composition, different injuries, previous results etc., may be of interest.

- 5 For other gambling societies corresponding data may be given. In a similar way odds and different advises related to all types of betting and gambling may be collected. Statistical data of different origin related to the game in question, may also be found. Accordingly it should be understood that the game unit 13 with its sub-units may be adapted to the different types of games and to the players desires.

- Once the player has collected all advices he needs to accomplish his game, he is asked to select his present combinations or systems by means of the telephone keys.

- When the desired game combination has been selected, it is transmitted to the communication exchange 11 which via the bank unit 12 checks whether there is sufficient coverage, whereupon the relevant account is debited and a clearance signal is sent to the game unit 13 at the same time as a receipt is made, registered and stored in the receipt unit 22 and possibly also in an isolated security store 30 via the communication exchange 11. The very game is then at once undertaken as the game unit 13 via the communication exchange 11 forward data to the selected bookmaker company 4,5 about the game which is made.

- It should be emphasized that all the shown interconnections between the different function blocks are implemented as two-way data connections which may be realized in any known manner if only the capacity and the bandwidth is sufficient to transmit the required signals. The signals may also be transmitted in different manners, i.e. as optical signals, as electronic voltage levels, and/or as puls code signals, and if desired the transmission may be undertaken on a multiplex basis within such systems.

- If the player has an associated personal computer PC 7, all information may possibly be transmitted via this computer, e.g. on Internett, or by directly establishing calls via the telecommunication network, e.g. via an ISDN connection, or via a more conventional analog telephone connection, to the gambling station 6. Information signals from/to the

personal computer 7 is treated in suitable interfaces in the personal computer itself or in the Internett unit 31.

The function of the plant substantially will be as explained above, but it should be emphasized that the system
5 may be varied and modified in many ways without leaving the scope of the present invention. Some of the functions may e.g. be located outside the gambling station, e.g. within an external bank 3 if expedient. The numbers used as information data may also include alpha numeric symbols as well as
10 numbers in a specific number system. Although the interfaces between different units normally will be placed within the communication unit 11, many of those may be located in other units if desired. It should also be noted that some or all functional units may be designed as separate electronic
15 circuits and/or may be implemented by means of software. The advices and the information needed as a basis for the game unit 13, may be collected from external and internal sources, several function units may be deleted from the central unit 6 and the number of players which can use the game
20 facilities at same time are only limited by the system design and complexity.

C l a i m s

1. A method for carrying out services via interactive telecommunication networks,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the service to be carried out is an interactive game procedure according to which players (1) who at least have a key telephone instrument (33) at their disposal may participate on an obligating basis in a gambling procedure, via a telecommunication network adapted to establish a two-way communication between each player (1), at least one public bookmaker (4,5), at least one bank (3) as well as a specific central unit or gambling-station (6) as
- each player (1) establishes a connection with the gambling station (6) and transmits his bank account number and his authori-zation/identification(PIN) code, and also a desired game specification,
 - that the gambling station (6) establishes a connection to the bank (3),
 - that the gambling station (6) returns an acceptance signal to the player (1) if the authorization/identification code is correct and the said bank account has coverage,
 - that the gambling station (6) establishes a connection to the public bookmaker (4,5) in question,
 - that the gambling station (6) collects relevant data on the game, for instance from the said public bookmaker (4,5),
 - that the gambling station (6) makes the collected data available to the player (1) via the telecommunication network,
 - that the gambling station (6) transmits instructions to the player (1) on how to handle his telecommunication equipment (7,32,33) to select the desired game combination and possibly correct same,
 - that the player (1) selects and transmits the desired game combinations to the gambling station (6) according to the received instructions,
 - that the gambling station (6) transmits data related to the transaction to the bank (3) for acceptance,
 - that the gambling station (6) transmits the accepted game-combination to the public bookmaker (4,5) and a debit order to the bank (3),

- that the gambling station (3) produces and takes care of the receipt for the combination played and the debeted amount and then send these pieces of information to the player (1).

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the player's (1) telecommunication equipment consists of a key telephone-instrument (33) only.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the player's (1) telecommunications equipment also comprises a television set (32) provided with a teletext facility and that the gambling station (6) comprises a teletext unit (16) adapted for transmission of specific teletext pages to each specific player.

4. A method as claimed in any one of the claims 1-3, characterized in that each player (1) in addition is provided with a computer (7) connected to the telecommunication network and adapted for transmitting the desired game combinations to the gambling station (6).

5. A central unit for carrying out services via interactiv telecommunication networks, characterized in that the central unit is designed as a gambling station (6) adapted to execute game procedures so that a telecommunication subscriber (1) may select game combinations or pay obligating stakes in games via interactiv telecommunication connections, which gambling station (6) comprises:

- an audio unit (10) adapted to transmit and receive data to/from the player (1),
- a computer/internet unit (31) adapted to transmit/-receive pieces of information to/from the computer (7) located at the player (1),
- a communication exchange (11) adapted to transmit and receive data to/from at least one public bookmaker (4,5), at least one bank (3), and at least one telecommunication station such as a television station (2),

- a bank unit (12) adapted to check the player's (1) identity and register receipt for the amount of money at stake,
- a game unit (13) adapted to collect, store and transmit relevant game data, and
- necessary interfaces to establish two-way connections between the telecommunication-network and the gambling station (6).

6. A central unit according to claim 5, characterized in that the communication exchange (11) in addition comprises a teletext unit (16) adapted to transmit separate teletext pages to each single player (1) via at least one television station (2).

7. A central unit according to one of the claims 5 or 6, characterized in that the communication exchange (11) in addition is connected to an identification unit (17) and member data base (18) adapted to check the identity of the player (1).

8. A central unit according to one of the claims 5-7, characterized in that the game unit (13) comprises sub-units (23, 24, 25) adapted for collecting detailed data related to the different games from external public bookmakers (4,5).

9. A central unit according to one of the claims 5-8, characterized in that the game unit (13) in addition comprises sub-unit (26, 27, 28, 29) adapted to collect game relevant information such as odds, system combinations, game statistics and reduced game systems.

10. A central unit according to one of the claims 5-9, characterized in that it in addition comprises or are connected to an additional, separate security memory (30) adapted to take care of copies of the receipts for games that are completed.

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 25 June 1997 (25.06.97);
original claims 1 and 5 amended; remaining claims unchanged (4 pages)]

1. A method for carrying out services via interactive telecommunication networks, and in particular services related to an interactive game procedure according to which players (1) who at least have a key telephone instrument (33) at their disposal may participate in a gambling procedure, via a telecommunication network adapted to establish a two-way communication between each player (1), at least one public bookmaker (4,5), as well as a specific central unit or gambling-station (6) as
- each player (1) establishes a connection with the gambling station (6) and transmits his identification code, and also a desired game specification thereto,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n t h a t
 - the telecommunication network also is connected to at least one bank (3) and that each player (1) also transmits his bank account number and/or his authorization code to the gambling station (6), whereupon
 - the gambling station (6) establishes a connection to the bank (3),
 - the gambling station (6) returns an acceptance signal to the player (1) if the authorization/identification code is correct and the said bank account has coverage,
 - the gambling station (6) establishes a connection to the public bookmaker (4,5) in question,
 - the gambling station (6) collects relevant data on the game, for instance from the said public bookmaker (4,5),
 - the gambling station (6) makes the collected data available to the player (1) via the telecommunication network,
 - the gambling station (6) transmits instructions to the player (1) on how to handle his telecommunication equipment (7,32,33) to select the desired game combination and possibly correct same,
 - the player (1) selects and transmits the desired game combinations to the gambling station (6) according to the received instructions,
 - the gambling station (6) transmits data related to the transaction to the bank (3) for acceptance,

- the gambling station (6) transmits the accepted game-combination to the public bookmaker (4,5) and a debit order to the bank (3), and
- the gambling station (3) produces and takes care of the receipt for the combination played and the debited amount and then send these pieces of information to the player (1), so that a game procedure is fulfilled on a binding basis.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the player's (1) telecommunication equipment consists of a key telephone-instrument (33) only.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the player's (1) telecommunications equipment also comprises a television set (32) provided with a teletext facility and that the gambling station (6) comprises a teletext unit (16) adapted for transmission of specific teletext pages to each specific player.

4. A method as claimed in any one of the claims 1-3, characterized in that each player (1) in addition is provided with a computer (7) connected to the telecommunication network and adapted for transmitting the desired game combinations to the gambling station (6).

5. A central unit for carrying out services via interactive telecommunication networks, which central unit is designed as a gambling station (6) adapted to execute game procedures so that a telecommunication subscriber (1) may select game combinations and pay stakes in games via interactive telecommunication connections, which gambling station (6) comprises:

- an audio unit (10) adapted to transmit and receive data to/from the player (1),
- a game unit (13) adapted to collect, store and transmit relevant game data, and
- necessary interfaces to establish two-way connections between the telecommunication-network and the gambling station (6),

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the gambling station in addition comprises:

- a computer/internet unit (31) adapted to transmit/-receive pieces of information to/from the computer (7) possibly located at the player (1),
- a communication exchange (11) adapted to transmit and receive data to/from at least one public bookmaker (4,5), at least one bank (3), and at least one telecommunication station such as a television station (2),
- a bank unit (12) adapted to check the player's (1) identity and register receipt for the amount of money at stake.

6. A central unit according to claim 5, c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the communication exchange (11) in addition comprises a teletext unit (16) adapted to transmit separate teletext pages to each single player (1) via at least one television station (2).

7. A central unit according to one of the claims 5 or 6, c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the communication exchange (11) in addition is connected to an identification unit (17) and member data base (18) adapted to check the identity of the player (1).

8. A central unit according to one of the claims 5-7, c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the game unit (13) comprises sub-units (23, 24, 25) adapted for collecting detailed data related to the different games from external public bookmakers (4,5).

9. A central unit according to one of the claims 5-8, c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n that the game unit (13) in addition comprises sub-unit (26, 27, 28, 29) adapted to collect game relevant information such as odds, system combinations, game statistics and reduced game systems.

10. A central unit according to one of the claims 5-9, characterized in that it in addition comprises or are connected to an additional, separate security memory (30) adapted to take care of copies of the receipts for games that are completed.

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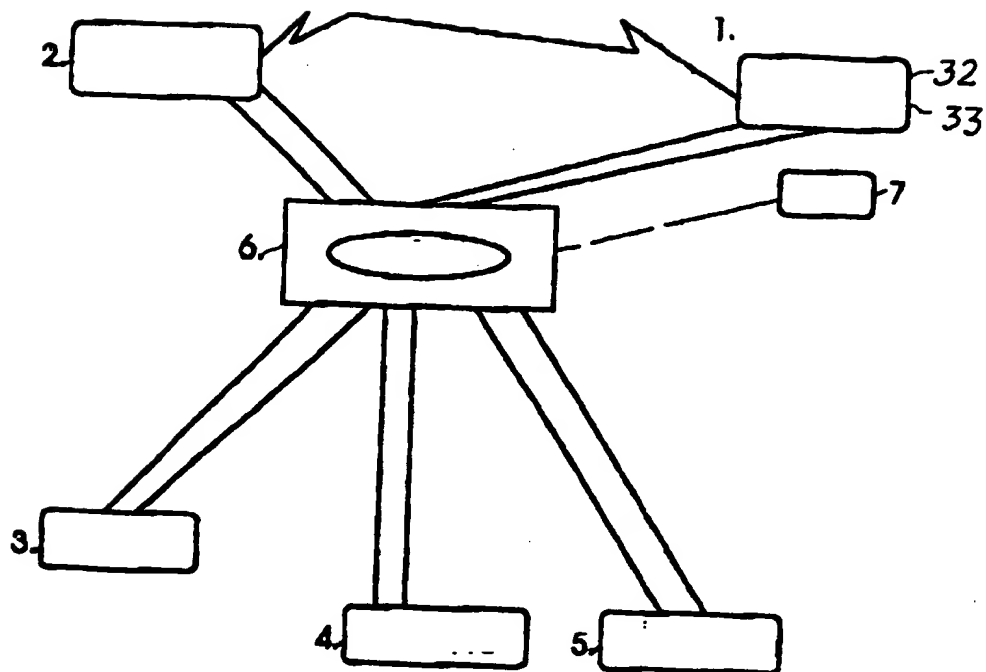


Fig. 1

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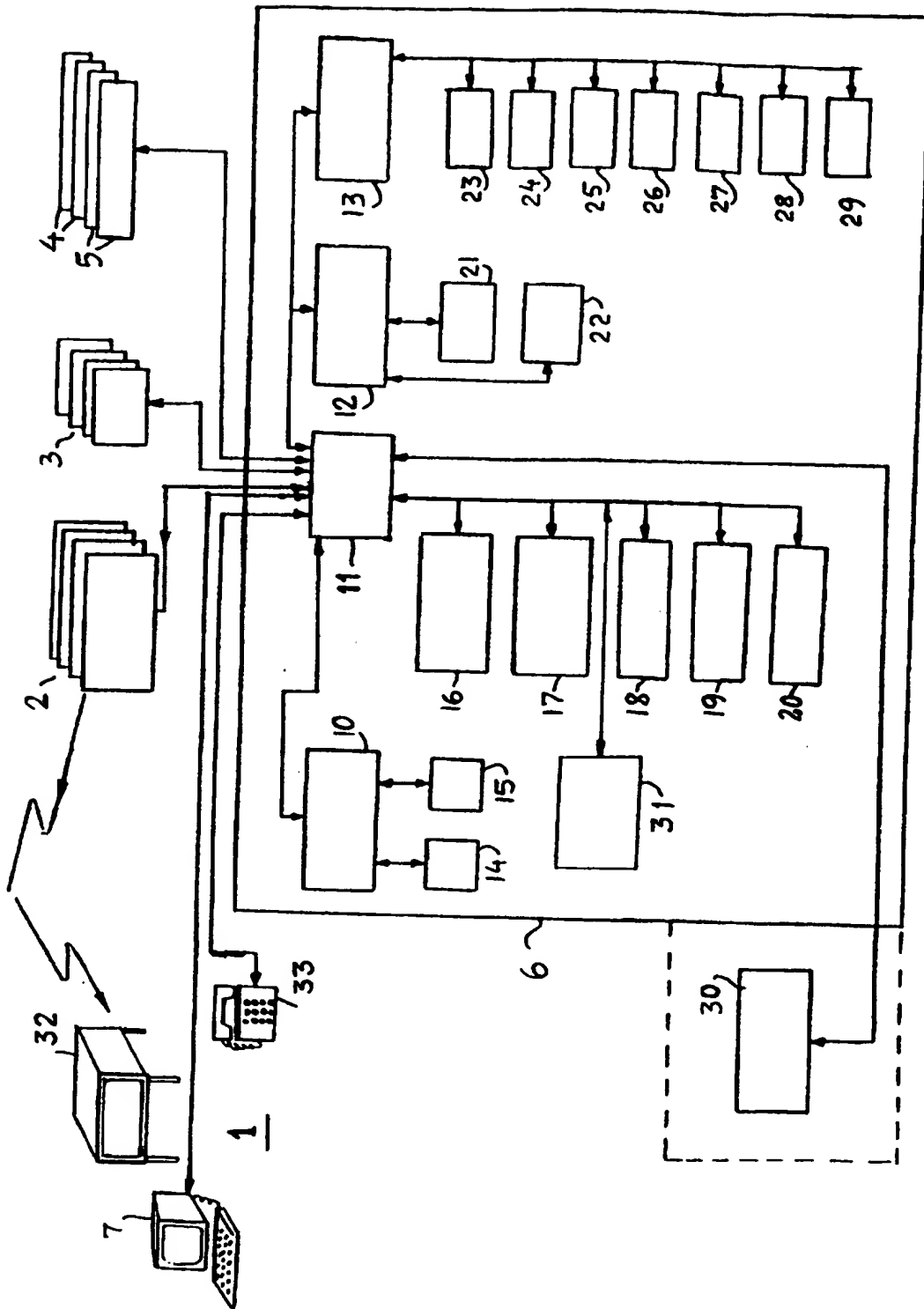


Fig. 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/NO 97/00021

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC6: H04M 11/08 // G06F 155:00
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC6: H04M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

WPI

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5365575 A (KATZ), 15 November 1994 (15.11.94), figure 1, abstract ---	5-10
X	US 5415416 A (SCAGNELLI ET AL), 16 May 1995 (16.05.95), see the claims. ---	5-10
X	US 5083272 A (WALKER ET AL), 21 January 1992 (21.01.92), column 2, line 65 - column 3, line 47 -----	5-10

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"B" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

25 April 1997

Date of mailing of the international search report

08 -05- 1997

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/NO 97/00021

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☒ Claims Nos.: 1-4
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

The subject matter of claims 1-4 relates to rules and a method of doing business transactions and playing games (see Rule 39.1 (iii))

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.

2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

02/04/97

International application No.

PCT/NO 97/00021

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5365575 A	15/11/94	WO 9305483 A	18/03/93
		US 4792968 A	20/12/88
		US 5218631 A	08/06/93
		US 5224153 A	29/06/93
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		US 5128984 A	07/07/92
		WO 8700375 A	15/01/87
US 5415416 A	16/05/95	NONE	
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